

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 1**  
**INCIDENT No. 2004-054**  
**Date: June 28, 2004 Time: 9:00 a.m.**

**TO:** Governor John Hoeven  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** **Extreme Dry Conditions** – Dry conditions, high winds and lack of rain, primarily in southwestern North Dakota and the Missouri River Basin, are contributing to crop and forage losses. This has caused an adverse economic effect on agribusiness and water supply shortages.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. **DAMAGES:** The N.D. Crop, Livestock and Weather Report, for the week ending June 13, indicated the southwest remains dry. Despite recent rainfall, current topsoil moisture supplies were rated 11 percent very short, nine percent short, 54 percent adequate and 26 percent surplus compared to previous year to date averages of four percent very short, nine percent short, 73 percent adequate and 14 percent surplus. Reduced or lost first-cutting hay crops were reported in areas that have been dry.

**ADAMS COUNTY**

Freezing temperatures, several days of up to 60 miles per hour (mph) winds and lack of rainfall in May have contributed to forage losses. Grazing is restricted due to the lack of pasture forage. Grain crops have been set back due to the unseasonably cold temperatures, high winds, blowing dust and lack of rainfall. Due to dry conditions, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office reported 2,437.3 acres of canola, 118.8 acres of spring wheat, 125.8 acres of oats, 165.6 of grass/mixed alfalfa (GMA) and 38.3 acres of alfalfa as failed to date. The moisture received in the county from January 1 to June 16, 2004, is 2.8 inches; the normal is 7.23 inches. The county is 38.7 percent below normal moisture with a 61.3 percent moisture loss for the year to date.

### BILLINGS COUNTY

The Billings County Emergency Manager indicated that the average rainfall for June is 6.6 inches. The current rainfall to date is one-half inches. Overall moisture is one-quarter normal. Several late frosts and lack of moisture have severely damaged winter wheat, beans and other legumes, alfalfa and corn crops. The County Agent for Billings/Golden Valley Counties stated most ranchers are grazing their hay grounds. Hay is 10 to 20 percent of normal for this time of year, and pastures are 25 percent normal. Grass is short, dry and low in nutrition. The N.D. State Land Department stated that from Watford City south, hay is virtually non-existent, grass is short and water resources are diminished.

### BOWMAN COUNTY

Officials in Bowman County indicated trees and shrubbery were affected early in the spring by late frosts. This frost also had a profound effect on alfalfa growth. The new growth of alfalfa is short and not adequate for current haying needs. New crop growth fared better than expected but is limited by lack of rainfall and cooler temperatures. Pasturelands are impacted the greatest, with most new growth stopping due to the lack of moisture. Ranchers, impacted by the limited growth of hay and pastureland, have started to cull herds. Reports from the FSA office indicate culling at 50 percent above average.

### GRANT COUNTY

The Grant County Emergency Manager indicated that high winds and dry conditions are contributing factors to a number of prairie fires. These fires consumed 20 tons of hay bales, approximately 49 acres of grassland, one barn, one truck and two tractors. Local officials reported feed and water shortages for livestock, crop failures, water problems, fire dangers and adverse economic effects on agri-business due to the dry conditions. Moisture received over the past two weeks has ranged from a trace of rain to five inches throughout the county. The southern portion of the county is the driest. Hay land is short and already headed out. Due to lack of moisture and late freeze, alfalfa crops are at a 75 to 90 percent loss. Most farmers/ranchers will find it necessary to go outside the county to purchase hay and feed.

### GOLDEN VALLEY

The County Extension Agent reported the county has received 1.72 inches of precipitation. Normal precipitation for the county is 6.6 inches for the April to June time frame. The county has received less than one-quarter of the normal precipitation during the critical growth period. As a result of limited rainfall, pastures and hay crops are only growing in drainages or where snow banks were located, resulting in one-tenth to one-fifth of the normal growth of cool season forages. The limited moisture has caused seeded crops to germinate slowly. Those crops that have germinated are spotty. A producer, desperate for pasture, has turned cattle onto hay fields and croplands. Agricultural officials estimate the hay crop to be 10 percent of normal.

#### HETTINGER COUNTY

The Hettinger County Emergency Manager indicated the entire county is in an emergency situation, with the worst cases in the south. Hay and grazing land is very short and all the crops are under stress. The temperatures in May and June have affected early and late crops. The county FSA office has requested a federal disaster for the county to open CRP land.

#### SIOUX COUNTY

The Sioux County Emergency Manager indicated a lack of pasture grass due to drought conditions.

#### 4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: Agencies monitoring dry conditions include county extension service officials, fire departments, dispatch centers, law enforcement, county and city public works crews, park boards and emergency management officials.

STATE: Agencies involved in monitoring the extreme dry conditions reports include the Governor's Office, N.D. Fire Marshal's Office, N.D. Division of Emergency Management (NDDEM), N.D. Forest Service (NDFS), N.D. Game and Fish Department (NDGF), N.D. Parks and Recreation Department (NDPR), N.D. Department of Agriculture (NDDA), N.D. State Water Commission (NDSWC) and N.D. Office of Management Budget (NDOMB).

FEDERAL: Agencies providing periodic reports include the National Weather Service (NWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Citizens in Grant County have helped to control grassfires, as well as donate food and prepare meals for firefighters.
6. MAJOR ACTIONS: On June 25, Governor John Hoeven issued a statewide agricultural emergency declaration in response to drought conditions in the southwest and excessive precipitation in the northeast and north central, which have seriously affected the agricultural industry and its related service providers statewide. The Governor will tour counties in drought stricken southwestern North Dakota early this week.

On June 18, the Governor's office and NDDEM conducted a meeting of the Drought Mitigation Task Force to discuss the extreme dry conditions. Participating agencies included the Governor's Office, NDDEM, the Fire Marshal's Office, FSA, NDGF, NDPR, NWS, NDSWC and NDFS.

On June 4, Governor John Hoeven requested the FSA conduct Damage Assessment Reports (DARs) for all North Dakota counties due to poor crop conditions and crop loss reports. Staff from the Governor's Office and NDDEM will review the reports, as well as weather data provided by state and local officials, to determine if USDA secretarial action should be pursued.

On May 26, Governor John Hoeven indicated the state is working to improve boat ramp access throughout the state. The low water at Lake Sakakawea has negatively impacted recreational areas. Officials for NDGF, NDPR, USACE and local entities have been working together to extend boat ramps. Lake Sakakawea has 36 recreation areas with multiple boat ramps. Last year, the state had 28 of the 36 ramps available. This year, the NDGF is hoping to have 25 ramps operational.

The FSA requested nine southwestern North Dakota counties for a Secretarial Designation to open Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land for haying and grazing. The counties include Adams, Billings, Bowman, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Slope, Sioux and Stark. These counties qualify based on a 40 percent departure from normal precipitation for the last four months. The FSA Board also recommended opening CRP land in nine counties on July 15. Approximately two million acres of CRP land will be initiated August 2, under managed haying and grazing. Farmers and ranchers, make arrangements with FSA to use the CRP.

The Bowman County FSA office requested the release of CRP lands for grazing and haying. The Bowman & Slope County Emergency Boards will meet June 25, to discuss the drought situation.

The Billings County Emergency Manager indicated the Medora Grazing Association is meeting with the N.D. Forest Service on Thursday, June 24, to discuss cattle grazing cuts, which will seriously impact the ranching industry.

The Adams County Emergency Manager participated in a drought meeting on June 17 with the County Extension Agent, the FSA County Executive Director (CED) and NRCS District Conservationist to discuss the deteriorating conditions in the county.

On May 19, NDDEM Director Doug Friez sent a letter to the USACE requesting an extension for the contract regarding the water intake system at Parshall, N.D. The NDDEM Director indicated that the current intake system will not be capable of drawing water for the city of Parshall, and requires an extension of the intake to deeper water to ensure drawing of water continues.

Drought emergency declarations have been issued by the boards of county commissions for Grant (May 4), Golden Valley (June 1) and Adams (June 10). The Sioux County Commission issued a drought disaster declaration (May 7).

7. ASSITANCE NEEDED: Local officials have requested state officials pursue USDA assistance for producers impacted by dry conditions .
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No additional outside help has been reported.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The North Dakota Division of Emergency Management Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>

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Douglas C. Friez, State Director